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Press Release

DOC Update on Status of Task Force Recommendations

DOVER - On February 14, 2005, the Governor's Task Force investigating the July 12, 2004 hostage situation at the Delaware Correctional Center issued its final report on the incident. The report included a number of recommendations. Since then, the Delaware Department of Correction has been cataloguing, discussing and implementing many of the recommendations in the report.

"These are serious issues we're discussing. We understand that Delaware citizens are interested in our efforts and I believe it is important to provide periodic updates on our progress," said DOC Commissioner Stan Taylor.

After the release of the 96-page report in February, the Department spent two weeks cataloguing the recommendations. Many recommendations focused on the same or similar subject matter and were consolidated into one recommendation. Once documented, they were assigned to one of six categories: security & equipment, policies & procedures, training, classification, management tools and pay. Further, some recommendations fall into more than one category.

Since the completion of that process, DOC Commissioner Stan Taylor has held a series of meetings with top DOC and DCC officials. These meetings continue. The goal of the meetings is to assess what recommendations the Department can implement with existing staff, finances and resources and those with which the DOC will need outside assistance and funding.

"We are having lengthy and detailed discussions on each of the recommendations," said Taylor. "We want to be thorough to ensure we follow the intent of the Task Force and to assure that we don't miss important details."

Several recommendations have already been implemented with existing DOC resources. These include enhancements to inmate security in the building where the hostage incident occurred, revisions to some inmate housing procedures, some changes to the inmate classification process and top DOC personnel making periodic, frequent, unannounced visits to various facilities.

A cost analysis is currently underway for recommendations that will require outside funding and resources. This includes discussions with the Governor's Office, the Budget Office and the General Assembly on additional funding to further increase correctional officer salaries, purchase recommended equipment (weapons, security cameras, additional door locks) and extending the correctional officer work week to allow for an extra half-hour for security briefings between shifts.

Discussions with State Personnel and the Department of Technology & Information are taking place regarding the implementation of an automated information system to track time-keeping, scheduling, overtime and training documentation. Discussions center on whether the already existing PHRST system can accommodate DOC needs. DTI is also helping the DOC to standardize radio communications.

"I expect implementation of the majority of recommendations to occur by the end of the year, with the implementation of all recommendations by April 2006," said Taylor.

The Department of Correction thanks the Governor's Task Force for its time and effort. The DOC remains committed to operating safe and secure prisons and the recommendations presented by the Task Force will help us to enhance our correctional system. To that end, we will work diligently to implement appropriate Task Force recommendations and monitor other new advances in the industry that can assist us in our commitment to public safety.